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ABSTRACT

A guide for developing a departmentally-based teaching assistant (TA) training program is presented. At the University of California, Los Angeles, (UCLA) part-time teaching assistant consultants who are experienced TAs have been employed to help with TA training programs. The following criteria are used to evaluate departmental proposals to hire TA consultants: demonstrated need, potential effectiveness of program design, democratic selection of the TA consultant, departmental support for the program, faculty supervision, and evaluation. Guidelines cover appointments and administrative policy for TA consultants. Training activities, faculty involvement, and topical ideas for departmental training courses are considered, along with departmental TA orientation and training seminars on teaching for specific departments. In addition to including the TA midterm evaluation form, attention is directed to peer observation, providing feedback, and the use of videotaping and group visitation in TA evaluation. Guidelines cover roles and responsibilities of TAs and supervising faculty for five departments. Obligations of the TA to the department and to the Office of Instructional Development are also outlined. (SW)

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TEACHING ASSISTANT TRAINING

A Guide for Developing Departmental TA Training Programs

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University of California, Los Angeles
80 Powell

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The materials in the Special Collection on the Training of Teaching Assistants were developed through the active efforts of numerous educators who first met at the 1986 National Conference on the Institutional Responsibilities and Responses in the Employment and Education of Teaching Assistants held at the Ohio State University. Assisted by more than 80 individuals, the committee chairs listed below were able to establish the collection which will be developed and maintained by the ERIC Clearinghouse for Higher Education. This arrangement will enable faculty members, faculty developers, administrators, TA supervisors, and graduate teaching assistants to have access to TA training materials produced by institutions across the nation.

Task Force on Establishing a National Clearinghouse of Materials Developed for TA Training

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OFFICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
TA TRAINING PROGRAM
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

September, 1987

Dear Department Chairs, Faculty Advisors, and TA Consultants:

Efforts to improve teaching may range from administrative edicts regarding formalized training or standards, to individual efforts seeking advice and guidelines on how to improve one's own teaching. The TA Training Program in the Office of Instructional Development at UCLA has sought an accommodating middle-ground by employing part-time Teaching Assistant Consultants, who are experienced TAs, to help the faculty with departmentally-based TA training programs. TA Consultants are selected by their departments and their specific duties may vary. The role of all TA Consultants, however, is to facilitate the improvement of undergraduate education by assisting teaching assistants in their own departments.

This collection of materials should be used as both a guide for developing an effective departmentally-based TA training program, and as a sourcebook of suggestions for improving existing programs. The first section outlines the obligations and expectations of TA Consultants who have responsibilities to the Office of Instructional Development which hires them, and to the department in which they work. The range of possibilities in setting up effective TA orientations and graduate-level seminars on teaching is demonstrated by the subsequent sections of this guide.

Please direct all comments and suggestions to the TA Training Program in 80 Powell at 825-9269. We hope that this guide will be useful to you as you explore ways to improve undergraduate instruction.

David Unruh
Coordinator for TA Training
Office of Instructional Development

THE TEACHING ASSISTANT CONSULTANT

The Office of Instructional Development provides twenty-eight departments on campus with funds for a TA Consultant. This consultant is an experienced teaching assistant chosen by the department to help with the department's training program.

Many TA Consultants are now employed for two terms -- usually Fall and Winter. There are some who are employed for all three terms as well. The 495 or the extensive training programs are generally offered for only one quarter; TA Consultants are available for consultation, to set up workshops and lead discussions throughout the remainder of their appointments.

TA Consultants' duties vary significantly from one department to the next. In some, they are the sole planners and instructors for the 495 course; in many, they plan and direct the 495 course in conjunction with the Faculty TA Advisor; in most, they plan the 495 in conjunction with the Faculty TA Advisor and conduct the course on their own; in a few, they participate only as adjunct personnel (i.e., in advisory, organizational, administrative, liaison, even clerical capacities), either outside or within the framework of the 495.

The appointments of the TACs left up to the departments are necessarily quite individual. Some TA Consultants are appointed in some unknown fashion by some mysterious committee or person. Some are appointed by recommendation of the previous TA Consultant and confirmation of the department chairperson or awards committee. Many are appointed by the departmental awards committee. One department actually has TAs elect the TA consultant; a few ask for the collaboration of the departmental graduate student association. Unfortunately, very few departments ask for input from TAs themselves in this decision.

PROGRAM FUNDING AND EVALUATION

Funding for TA consultants is provided by the Office of Instructional Development. Departments with established programs receive an annual allocation to support the hiring of a TA Consultant. Departments without an established program may submit a proposal to the TA Training Advisory Committee for consideration of support. The following criteria are used to evaluate the departmental proposals.

1. Demonstrated Need

The following characteristics constitute evidence of need:

- Large numbers of students are typically enrolled in classes with TAs.
- Large numbers of TAs are affected.

• There is a high turnover of TA personnel such that new TAs must be trained in an ongoing program each new quarter.

• The complexity of the discipline makes relatively difficult demands on its TAs. For example, in fields where TAs must help students with abstract material that is difficult to learn/teach, TA training is more crucial. Where TAs must be available to teach in a variety of courses that require difficult methodologies, a higher base funding level is needed since it takes more staff time to expose TAs to different methodologies.

2. **Potential Effectiveness of Program Design**

A program is judged to be potentially effective under the following circumstances:

• The department must provide evidence that it has studied the problems of its TAs and that its program can meet TA needs.

• The department must show, by outlining a TA training course's syllabus in sufficient detail, that it is prepared effectively to implement a program.

• The department has a TA orientation program shortly before the Fall term begins, in addition to meetings throughout the term.

• Changes in funding depend upon demonstrated success of the past program and/or presentation of potentially effective remedies for past deficiencies of the program.

3. **Democratic Selection of TA Consultant (TAC)**

• Criteria for selection of a TAC must be clearly stipulated and advertised department-wide.

• Criteria for selection of the TAC should include the following:

- The TAC must have experience as a TA at UCLA in the department sponsoring the program.
- The TAC must have demonstrated high effectiveness as a TA.
- The TAC must be dedicated to the program.

• The TAC must be selected by a committee that includes student members.

4. **Departmental Support for the Program**

• Departments are expected to make an effort to provide resources of their own for the program such as office space, supplies, secretarial assistance, and, where possible, matching funds.

• Faculty participation in the program is considered evidence of departmental support for TA training and is strongly encouraged. Participation may consist of guest lectures by faculty members during TA meetings.

• Mandatory participation for TAs constitutes additional

evidence of departmental support.

5. **Faculty Supervision**

- The department must appoint a faculty member to supervise the program.

- However, the TAC must have sufficient autonomy to meet with other TAs in group and private sessions without faculty present.

- The TAC must not be viewed as an assistant to a faculty member, but must have separate facilities to carry out TAC duties as he or she sees fit.

6. **Evaluation**

- Evaluation of TAs in the course of training is not to be entered into the TA's files.

- Evaluation of TAs by the TAC must remain confidential, and any videotapes must not be preserved for departmental records. They must not be shown to anyone other than the TA who has been taped.

- The TAC must not assist in the allocation of TAships. Participation of the TA consultants might expose them to problems which could affect their graduate careers and peer relationships.

- The department must make provisions for evaluation of the TAC and training program by the participating TAs. The results of those evaluations must be filed with the Office of Instructional Development.

GUIDELINES FOR DEPARTMENTAL TA CONSULTANTS

Appointments

- The TAC must be an experienced TA in the department and must be enrolled for the term of employment.

- The TAC has a primary obligation to TAs, but must be capable of communicating well with all members of the department.

- The position should be publicized clearly (i.e. with specific criteria for the selection and with an outline of the workload) among senior TAs well before the appointment is made.

- The TAC should be chosen and notified of the appointment during the quarter preceding employment. A TAC who is expected to begin the appointment in the fall quarter must be notified of the appointment before the end of the preceding spring quarter. The department must notify the Office of Instructional Development, in writing, of the appointment at the same time. Failure to make the appointment in a timely manner, or to properly notify the Office of Instructional Development of the appointment may result in the withdrawal of OID funding for the position.

Administrative Policy

- University policy prohibits the use of staff personnel in teaching positions, therefore

TACs must not be used to teach undergraduate classes (a TAC is a staff, not an academic appointment).

- A TAC should not be used for duties other than leading training activities and/or developing, coordinating, and implementing training programs.

- The TA Advisory Committee wishes to promote the use of TACs as peer advisors for TAs. In order to effectively perform their diagnostic and remedial functions, TACs must establish a privileged relationship with TAs and create an atmosphere of confidence. For this reason, TACs may not in any way participate in personnel decisions regarding TA appointments, reappointments, advancement, dismissal, or other disciplinary actions, nor may faculty or chairs request information of them in regard to these actions.

- TACs should not keep nor compile files of formal TA student evaluations. Class observations and consultations must be kept confidential. Videotapes, evaluation forms, and materials used in training must not be used in any other context. All information collected about a TA by a TAC must be destroyed or returned to the TA at the end of the quarter.

- The department should provide each TAC with a description of the department's training program and the TAC's departmental duties.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The TAC is the liaison between the TA Training Program in the Office of Instructional Development and individual departments. The appointment, therefore, carries obligations to both the administrative program and the department.

Obligations to TA Training/OID

- The TAC must meet individually with the TA Coordinator once during the term prior to commencement of the appointment and once during the first term of duty.

- The TAC must attend the group meetings of all TACs (one or two meetings per quarter), and may be asked to serve on advisory boards.

- An orientation/training meeting will be required of all TACs prior to the beginning of fall quarter or during the first week of that quarter. This should not be confused with the fall campus-wide conference for TAs.

- The TAC must prepare, distribute, and compile evaluations of the departmental program at the end of each quarter.

- The TAC is responsible (in conjunction with the department chair and the Faculty TA Advisor) for the department's end-of-year report submitted to the TA Training Program.

Obligations to the Department

These may vary greatly in view of the departmental structure and need, but may include:

- observation of TAs' sections
- holding office hours for TAs
- conducting end-of-quarter evaluations of departmental training efforts
- assisting in planning and implementing the department's 495 course or training program
- consulting with individual TAs
- arranging videotaping and providing evaluation as requested
- encouraging faculty to participate in training TAs
- arranging workshops
- collecting and organizing resources for sharing among TAs
- arranging peer observations
- making midterm evaluation forms available
- other duties pertaining to training activities

DEPARTMENTAL TA TRAINING PROGRAMS AT UCLA

The 495 Course

Most department training programs fall under the heading of a 495 course, which enables the department to give credit (not applicable toward a degree) for the time spent in training activities. Most departments require the 495 for their new TAs and leave it optional for others; several require it of all TAs; and a few make it optional for everyone. The 495 is usually offered during the fall term, when there is the highest number of TAs.

- A few departments offer extensive training courses during the spring term before the TA appointment begins. This plan means that TAs should be notified early about their appointments. While this would not be possible in a few departments, others could accommodate this demand. The fall term may then deal with the real-life classroom.

- Some departments require the 495 of all TAs and use it as an administrative session, or an extension of the departmental graduate student association.

- The 495 usually meets weekly, with each meeting lasting from one to three hours. Syllabi from a variety of 495 courses are available from the TA Training Program and some are outlined below.

- The main advantages of the 495 course are that: 1) it can ease the unit-burden on individual TAs whose departments have minimum unit requirements; and 2) the training program can demand the attendance of TAs since credit is offered. In general even TAs who have been dragged kicking and screaming to the 495 sessions have found the training program of some value.

Training Activities

There are a number of training activities presented in the 495 class or elsewhere which are prevalent in training programs all over campus. These common activities include:

- **Videotaping services:** Many departments require TAs to be videotaped at least once during their first teaching term. Most departments make videotaping available to all TAs and encourage it rather than require it. Evaluation of the videotapes is usually done by the TA with the TA Consultant. At least one department has a required second videotaping which is also evaluated by a peer group.

- **TA Consultant observation:** In most departments, a basic function of the TAC is to observe all TAs in their classrooms at least once or twice a term. These sessions are normally prefaced and followed by individual discussions between the TA and TAC. Most departments use a form (provided in this manual or one of their own) to record

reactions, criticisms, and applause.

• **Faculty observation:** This is not as common as anyone would like, and it is nearly always a question of voluntary interest on the part of the faculty member. Professors in charge of a course for which TAs direct discussions often observe them once a term to helpfully critique the TA's teaching.

One well-set up department requires faculty members to observe two TAs once per quarter and submit detailed evaluations to the program and discuss it with the TA. Few department training programs are confident enough to demand this of faculty, but there is an agreement about its usefulness in departments which do so.

Another well-organized program assigns each TA to a different faculty member each quarter who observes and advises them on teaching matters (i.e., constructing exams, originating paper topics and other assignments, exam and paper grading, cheating, plagiarism, and confidentiality).

• **Peer observation:** This practice seems to be gaining popularity. Some departments require quite a bit of visiting back and forth among first-year TAs. Others require new TAs to observe those more experienced; still others require more experienced TAs to observe first-year people. In some instances, new TAs are assigned to a more experienced one to facilitate exchange of ideas and experiences. Some departments suggest all of the above and encourage TAs to set up their own observations.

A number of departments have developed some innovative approaches to their particular situations and needs. Many of these strategies could be used in other departments:

• Several departments have compiled video libraries for themselves by using TA Training Program Mini-Grants. These departments have had their best TAs preserve exemplary lessons on videotape. The tapes can be used during orientation as an example of a class setting, as part of individual or group advising sessions, or as an example of how a particular problem was overcome or a difficult piece of material conveyed.

• One TA initiated a group review of her own videotape. She requested the videotaping, reviewed it by herself, with an advisor, and then edited it down to a 20-minute presentation for a 495 meeting. After the presentation, she began the discussion with a brief self-evaluation, then asked for critical comments from the group. The discussion was lively, supportive, positive, and went right to the heart of many fundamental teaching issues. It proved interesting for the videotaped TA, her peers, and engendered a discussion helpful to everyone involved. While this kind of

TA-initiated evaluation may require nerves of steel (and without a doubt it was a gutsy move), the experience for her and everyone else involved was extremely positive. Perhaps this sort of thing could be worked into the syllabus of a 495 course.

• One department requires--along with several videotaping sessions--that every TA audiotape his or her section, then review it to make sure that the discussion itself is organized, coherent, and responsive to the questions and confusions of the students. The TA turns in a written critique of the section--the tape itself is not heard by anyone else unless the TA requests it.

• A demonstration class can be set up quite easily and is of particular use to a language department where concern for consistency across sections is great. One department using this strategy chose an experienced TA to teach a section of the elementary language course at noon, Monday through Friday. No other sections of the same class were scheduled for that hour. This "demonstration class" was kept one day ahead of all the other sections, and new TAs were required to attend for the first four weeks of the quarter. They were encouraged to observe future lessons for which they anticipated problems in their own teaching. The four-week requirement is a massive time commitment and not all departments will feel it is warranted. However, the availability of the precise lesson plan to be taught is a valuable offering for TAs who must be consistent with the departmental plan.

• A few departments arrange for their TAs to be notified of their appointments the term before they teach and their training may begin early. Several advantages may be identified. First, the bulk of training takes place before the TAs' time is at a premium. Before the first term of teaching, more time can be given to theoretical and practical preparation, and training during the first term can then be directed toward particular problems in the classroom.

Two departments have paired new TAs with experienced ones during this pre-teaching term. The new TAs observe those experienced and discuss teaching strategies, work with them in setting up a one- or two-day lesson plan, and then present it in the experienced TA's section near the end of the term.

In one language department, all new TAs are put on fellowship money during the fall term. Thus they have the time to participate in an intensive training program during the fall, and are armed with lesson plans, media equipment experience, exams, and confidence to teach in the winter.

• One faculty TA Advisor who teaches sections similar to those taught by TAs requires TAs to observe the class

several times during the quarter.

• One TAC found it effective to send the department faculty members a list of potential topics for lecture or discussion in the 495, with a request for their contributions. Several faculty members responded and provided some interesting and relevant presentations. In addition, this identified them to the TAs concerned teachers, willing advisors, or simply sympathetic souls.

• Departments whose TAs have a relatively free hand in their classrooms have evolved different ways of sharing resources. A notebook or a cabinet identified as TA owned and operated can contain lesson plans, handouts, suggestions, paper topics, solutions to thorny classroom situations, visual aids, and the like. A little organization by the TAC can make this material accessible for TAs.

Faculty Involvement in TA Training

Faculty involvement in TA training efforts ranges from dedicated to abysmal. There are a few departments that demand faculty involvement through required hours of observation of, and discussion, with TAs. There are a number of departments concerned with teaching and whose faculty members consult with TAs and attend the 495. There are also departments whose Faculty TA Advisor either directs or participates significantly in the 495. There are departments in which the Faculty TA Advisor helps construct the 495 or, at least, approves the TAC's organization of it. There are also departments whose faculty finds teaching in general--and TA training in specific--an intrusive bore and waste of time. Not surprisingly, there is a high correlation between departmental enthusiasm, innovation, and concern with TA training and the degree of faculty involvement. Departments whose training programs are most effective and most relevant to classroom experience are those whose faculty members worry about their teaching, discuss their concerns with TAs, and work out new strategies to deal with problems. TA training enjoys a position of inherent importance. Attendance in the 495 is very high, and more experienced TAs voluntarily take advantage of training activities to improve their own teaching skills. Thus, training activities are viewed as helpful and relevant rather than bothersome requirements. In departments where training efforts do not have the clear support and approval of the faculty, TA training may become an unwelcome time-sink. Presentations are poorly or resentfully attended and, in some instances, the 495 has not even lasted the fall term.

Topic Ideas for 495

Special Departmental Needs: Each department has specific needs and desires. To account for this, it may be

appropriate to include specific topics in your department's TA training program. For instance, the Geography department has a workshop on maps and use of the map library, Biology on pre-professional students and their sometimes hostile attitude, and Chemistry on laboratory safety.

Open Discussion: Some TAs have felt it necessary to set aside time for TAs to air problems. TAs generally feel more comfortable if the faculty representative is NOT present at these sessions. In some 495 courses, time is set aside at the beginning or end of most meetings for open discussion. The concerns and interests expressed during these discussions can be the basis for a shift in topic emphasis later in the course.

Philosophy of Teaching: This subject is difficult to review in a quarter, much less in an hour or two. In some departments, faculty are invited to talk about their philosophy of teaching, while others have tried panel discussions including both TAs and faculty. The TA Training Program may also be able to invite other members of the campus community to participate in panels. There has been some interest in materials on this subject, and we welcome your ideas.

The Undergraduate View of the TA: Valuable insight into teaching effectiveness may be gained through analysis by undergraduate students. The Biology department asked TAs in their 495 course to submit ideas on key issues for the learning atmosphere on effective teaching. A synthesis of these ideas was given to a panel of undergraduate students to discuss at a meeting of the 495 course at which the TAs rated the session highly.

TA and Faculty Interaction: The usefulness of this topic varies across departments. For the most part, there are few problems and they can be handled on a one-to-one basis, or during an open discussion session. One department has treated it as a panel discussion featuring professors and TAs discussing how the faculty member and the assistant help one another. This format was used:

1. TA assistance to professors
   a. Funneling student feedback sensitively;
   b. Fostering student enthusiasm for the program;
   c. Role in awarding grades (including awareness of students; circumstances).

2. Professor's role
   a. Supervising the TA directly on occasion;
   b. Constructively criticizing the TA;
   c. Offering suggestions;
   d. Soliciting criticism.

Teaching Quantitative Skills: Math anxiety and the special techniques for presenting quantitative materials may be useful in 495 courses. The Biology TAC ran a conference workshop on this which covered the following topics:

1. How to study quantitative materials

a. Stay up to date because understanding is built on a comprehensive basis (i.e., each new item is based upon an understanding of the previous items);

b. Review the material continually.

2. How TAs can help their students

a. Check student understanding of both the question being asked and the particulars of the problem;

b. Help students overcome math anxiety;

c. Be aware of the special problems and concerns of pre-professional, social science, and physical science students.

Special Students and Special TAs: It may be useful to discuss teaching in light of special situations. For instance, departments with many non-native English speaking students or TAs may benefit from a guest speaker on English as a second language. The Winter 1987 issue of The TA at UCLA Newsletter contains a wealth of helpful information on this important topic.

Women TAs: Women sometimes experience particular problems in the classroom which could benefit from discussion. The Spring 1986 issue of The TA at UCLA Newsletter is devoted to the topic of "Women and Sexism in Higher Education" and may be helpful in stimulating discussion.

The Campuswide TA Training Program: You may call on the Coordinator of the TA Training Program to discuss the campuswide program with your 495 class. You may also arrange special topic discussions and invitations for guest speakers. We also have a small lending-library of teaching materials. You might also look at the following:

C. Mackay and P. Taylor. Righting Writing: A Guide to Composition, Department of English, UCLA, 1978.

W.J. McKeachie. Teaching Tips: A Guide for the Beginning College Teacher, Lexington, MA: D.C. Health, 1978.

Library Service: The URL and Powell Library are willing to send someone to your 495 to inform TAs of services available to graduate and undergraduate students. They can provide useful and practical knowledge to all graduate students about a range of available services including government publications, special collections, book reserve, inter-library loans, indexes, bibliographical services, references, and the like.

Minorities in the Classroom: A large number of UCLA's undergraduates are members of a racial or ethnic minority. For them, UCLA can seem a particularly foreign, and therefore hostile, environment. Often they come from social or cultural backgrounds different from most UCLA students. In one study, 38% of the UCLA

undergraduates surveyed reported they had been in classes where some form of racism had surfaced. A session on the special problems of minority students may be useful to your TAs. TAs can be informed of the special services, courses, clubs, and other organizations available on campus for minority students. The participation of undergraduates as well as minority faculty can be particularly useful.

The Returning Student: A substantial portion of the undergraduate population at UCLA are now over 25 and most have been out of the academic environment for several years and are returning to utilize opportunities they never had when younger. Many are part-time students with outside responsibilities and they may feel out of place in what has been a haven for the young. Many feel unprepared and overwhelmed by their image of the university. There is no question that few university teachers, including TAs, are prepared to deal with this influx of "new" students.

THE DEPARTMENTAL TA ORIENTATION

There seems to be a move toward more informative and elaborate orientations in individual departments. Most of the orientations take place during the registration week immediately prior to the fall term.

- One language department has a particularly elaborate orientation during early September, consisting of two full weeks for new TAs and one full week for returning TAs. Offerings include a tour of the department; extensive training in video equipment; an introduction to available media equipment; an in-depth discussion of language teaching methodology; a detailed examination of the term's syllabus with particular attention paid to the individual lesson plan; workshops conducted by guest speakers on the topics of writing, testing, exam writing, exam giving, and cheating. TAs emerge from this extensive orientation with a precise vision of the course requirements and with exact lesson plans for the entire term. They also develop confidence in the department, realistic expectations of their own performance, and a feeling of community with their department and peers.

- Language departments tend to have the most elaborate orientations because of the need for their progressive/ ongoing programs. One interesting presentation was offered to a group of new language teachers. The presentation was entirely in Russian, which none of them understood, and which gave them the experience they would shortly require of their students.

- Shorter orientations often concentrate on discussions of meeting the first class. This is often done before the first meeting of the 495 or training group. Mini-lessons may also be presented to the group with or without videotaping.

- Most other departments have orientations of lengths ranging from a few hours to several days. They try to present the TAs with the department's standards and goals, its resources (i.e. video possibilities, media equipment, etc.), and an introduction to problems they may encounter and possible solutions for them. Administrative hoopla at the beginning of the year can also be covered at this time. Departments vary a great deal with some being usefully innovative and others doing boringly obligatory jobs. Some simply welcome new TAs, while other departments seriously attempt to explain the workings of the department, the course, and the university.

Some suggestions on how to organize a departmental orientation have been included here for those TACs who are responsible for conducting their department's orientation. Outlines of orientation programs offered

by a number of departments have also been included to provide TACs with some ideas for their own orientation programs.

Organizing a Departmental Orientation

The orientation is in essence a presentation of the entire program in a microcosm. It requires innumerable little errands which may overwhelm the TAC if he or she is not careful. The following may be helpful in organizing a departmental orientation.

- The first task is to reserve the necessary rooms in either Ackerman Union, Kerckhoff Hall, or through your department office.

- The next task is to notify TAs of the orientation (usually the Thursday or Friday before the first day of class) in a formal letter from the chair, the graduate advisor, and the TAC. This should be done at approximately the same time as the room reservation -- about three weeks in advance.

- Catering. Coffee and donuts in the morning, sandwiches and punch in the afternoon if possible. Often a department will pick up the tab for these items. Discuss this with your department chair. If the department will not cover these items in some cases it may be possible to obtain a TA Mini-Grant to help defray the costs. Catering can be tricky. If the orientation is held in Kerckhoff or Ackerman, only ASUCLA catering can cater. If it is somewhere else, University Catering can cater. While a two or three workday notice is usually sufficient, there is always the possibility that something may be afoot on campus (a tennis tournament, e.g.) at the same time. The sooner this is arranged, the better.

- Select and photocopy readings to be used. Short, interesting articles are preferable. After selecting the readings, have them copied by your department. Depending on how busy they are, it can take from one to seven days to get them back.

- Write a cover letter and mail it with the readings to all participants. This should be done at least seven to ten days before the orientation.

- Invite interested faculty, particularly those who will be using TAs in the coming academic year, to meet with the TAs. Give the faculty adequate notice.

- Meet with and invite the graduate advisor to say a few words at the beginning of the orientation. You might also use this meeting to brief him or her about what you expect to do in the 495.

- Contact Audio-Visual Services (x66591) about videotaping a demonstration section if necessary. Contact them a week in advance and specify that you will need recording and playback machines, a tape, and an operator.

• Contact two current or former TAs to lead demonstration sessions if these will be part of your orientation. Seven to ten days advance notice is customary.

• On the day of the orientation, you may want to discuss the goals of the program and your role before the other activities. An agenda for the orientation is a good idea. Bring along forms for evaluating the orientation and schedule information.

In general, when you contact people in writing, you should follow up with an in-person meeting or phone call to pressure them into attending. This is particularly true for experienced TAs and faculty. Also, the university-wide TA orientation is normally held the Wednesday before the departmental one. Workshop attendance may be helpful for the TACs as well as TAs.

A Pre-Orientation Preparation Schedule

Chore	Advance Notice
Reserve Room(s)	3 weeks
Letter from dept. to TAs	3 weeks
Photocopy Readings	2-3 weeks
Arrange Catering	1-2 weeks

ASUCLA 825-0611, ext. 277
Faculty Center 825-0877
University Catering 825-7021
North Campus 825-0611, ext. 331

Invite Faculty	10 days
Mail Readings and Cover Letter	7-10 days
Contact Experienced TAs	7-10 days
Contact Audio Visual Services about Videotaping	1 week

Department Orientation Schedule

9:00

I. Rules and Regulations affecting TAs

• These are stipulated in the departmental memo--other items such as parking, fee deferments, salary advances, tax status, use of departmental equipment, etc.

• Call attention to University rules in The TA at UCLA, e.g. plagiarism and cheating, etc.

9:30

II. Resources Session: Teaching Resources Available on Campus

• Counseling assistants, TA Mini-grants for instructional improvement, peer counselors, Placement and Career Planning Center, psychological and counseling services, composition lab, and ARC learning lab.

10:00-12:00

III. Sections Simulation -- Videotaping and Evaluation

12:30-1:30

IV. Improving Sections

- Discussion of general problems not possible to address on the videotape (e.g. writing, meeting a first section, teaching styles, and purpose of sections).

- Several handouts containing ideas and suggestions.

2:00-4:00

V. New TA Presentations

- Received articles on book chapter a week in advance and asked to prepare a short 15-20 minute "section" on it with the other TAs playing the students' roles.

TRAINING SEMINARS

FINE ARTS

Music 495

Week 1:
- Aims/structure of course
- Departmental resources
- The first class
- Establishing a learning environment

Week 2:
- Preparing lessons
- Teaching techniques
- Effective blackboard use

Week 3:
- Students as active participants in learning
- Motivating students
- Music teaching - unique problems

Week 4:
- Promoting retention of course material
- Writing tests
- Grading tests and papers

Week 5:
- Peer observation: evaluation and observation techniques
- Observation and feedback for new TAs
- Self-evaluating strengths and weaknesses
- Videotaping of individual TAs

Weeks 6-8:
- Observation and evaluation of individual TA videotapes

Week 9:
- Observation and evaluation of individual TA videotapes
- Wrap-up discussion and evaluation of Music 495

HUMANITIES

ESL 375K and 495K

ESL 375K is a 4-unit practicum graded on an s/u basis for all TAs teaching an ESL Service course during a given quarter. The aim of the course is to serve as (1) a vehicle for accomplishing teaching-related administrative tasks, (2) a forum for the presentation of new policy, curriculum, materials, and evaluation procedures, and (3) an opportunity for teachers at a particular level to meet with each other and with their supervisors to discuss issues of concern.

ESL 495K is a seminar designed to develop the pedagogical skills of TAs teaching ESL Service courses. Topics addressed include writing as social interaction, the definition/description paper, controlled versus free writing, contract learning, "brain-storming," peer correction, and the teaching of vocabulary.

German 495A

Week 1:
- Professionalism (responsibilities and attitudes)

Week 2:
- Oral practice for learning grammar
- Organizations and services available for TAs in German

Week 3:
- Oral practice for autonomous interaction

Week 4:
• Teaching listening skills

Week 5:
• Structured interaction/ teaching the sound system

Weeks 6 and 7:
• Teaching reading skills

Weeks 8 and 9:
• Teaching writing

Week 10:
• How to evaluate a textbook

German 495B

Week 1:
• Course introduction; selection and distribution of textbooks

Weeks 2-4:
• Textbook evaluation

Week 5:
• Methods and materials for teaching non-traditional courses (German for: seniors, children, tourists, etc.)

Week 6:
• The teaching and testing of culture

Week 7:
• Proficiency-based instruction

Week 8:
• Computer-aided instruction

Week 9:
• Articulation problems from first to second-year German

Week 10:
• Formulating your own teaching style

Linguistics 495

Week 1:
• Goals of the course
• TA responsibilities
• Preparation
• Dealing with students in and outside the classroom

Weeks 2 and 3:
• Evaluating teaching methods, structure, style
• Presentations covering material/problems at the level of an introductory linguistics course

Week 4:
• Discussion of homework construction, exams, grading, cheating, problem students, and other concerns

Week 5:
• Observation and critique of a Linguistics 1 lecture

Week 6:
• Discussion of class sections (observed the previous week)
• Motivating students

Week 7:
• Videotaped presentations to the group

Week 8:
• Viewing of taped presentations to the group

Week 9:
• Observation of Linguistics 1 lectures all week
• Preparation for and teaching of an actual Linguistics 1 discussion section

Week 10:
• Discussion and evaluation of week 9 section instruction
• Informal talk with faculty member regarding teaching

introductory courses and the role of the TA

Spanish 495

Spanish 495, which is graded on a s/u basis, is a course designed to enhance the pedagogical skills of Spanish TAs. Practical topics covered include grading, test construction, lesson planning, teaching techniques, effective aspects of teaching, and creativity in teaching. Theoretical aspects of Spanish teaching addressed include the history of foreign-language teaching, theories of language giving rise to modern methods of foreign-language teaching, and research in new methodologies.

LIFE SCIENCES

Biology 495

Week 1:
- Orientation
- Meeting the first class
- Scheduling office hours

Week 2:
- Introduction
- Resource book

Week 3:
- Audio-video aids
- Checking understanding
- Dignifying errors

Week 4:
- Teaching conceptually
- Teaching for critical thinking

Week 5:
- Workshop: Teaching without terms

Week 6:
- Grading procedures
- Academic dishonesty

Week 7:
- Writing exams
- Communication skills
- Videotaping of individual TAs

Week 8:
- Public speaking
- Committees, TA support decisions
- Evaluations

Week 9:
- Leading a discussion
- Non-lecture courses

Week 10:
- Peer review of videotapes

Kinesiology 495

Week 1:
- The teaching role and its problems
- Meeting the first class

Week 2:
- Lecture preparation, organization and presentation

Week 3:
- Teaching effectiveness
- Motivating students
- Enhancing student interaction

Week 4:
- Exams: Proctoring, cheating, grading, and evaluation

Week 5:
- Experienced TA perspectives
- Running a lab

Week 6:
- Videotaping of individual TAs

Week 7:
- Videotape review and critiques

Week 8:
- Public speaking

Week 9:
- Mastery Teaching videotape series

Week 10:
- Course summary and evaluation

Psychology 495

The Psychology 495 TA seminar is conducted on two Saturdays at the beginning of Fall Quarter:

Day 1:
- Meeting with the department chair
- Discussion of TA/faculty issues--anticipating problems
- Teaching as a skill--Psychology faculty guest speaker
- Sex roles and teaching--guest speaker from the Women's Resource Center
- Undergraduates and TAs--a panel of two undergraduates
- Test construction

Day 2:
- Tough questions in office hours
- Handling cheating
- Library research--guest speaker from the ED/PSYCH library
- Letters and Science counseling--Psychology department counseling assistants
- Public speaking and stage fright--guest speaker from Speech department
- Viewing of old videotapes from previous 495 courses
- Five-minute lecture videotaping of individual TAs

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Physics 495

Week 1:
- Generalizations from videotapes
- Extemporaneous speaking--guest speaker from Speech department

Week 2:
- Grading lab reports
- Office hours

Week 3:
- Midterm exams: proctoring, cheating, and grading

Weeks 4-6:
- Discussions on teaching techniques with distinguished teachers from the Physics department

Week 7:
- Questionnaires
- Feedback from midterm evaluations

Week 8:
- Comments, questions, and answers
- Wrap-up

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Anthropology 395

Week 1:
- Lesson planning (speaker from School of Education)

Week 2:
- Public speaking (speaker from Speech Department)

Week 3:
- Practicum: machine use

Week 4:
- Writing and grading exams (speaker from School of Education)

Week 5:
- Getting them to talk

Week 6:
- Workshop: Lesson planning

Week 7:
- Workshop: Getting them to talk

Week 8:
- Teaching writing (speaker from the English Department)
- Workshop: Lesson planning

Week 9:
- Student advising (Anthropology undergraduate advisor)

Week 10:
- Plagiarism and cheating (speaker from Dean of Students office)

Anthropology 495

The Anthropology 495 seminar is divided into four basic components: the Workshop Week, Brown Baggery, Journal, and Final Essay. First-time TAs participate in the Workshop Week, an intense four-day seminar led by the TAC. The week's activities are outlined below. Brown Baggery consists of a weekly series of discussions on important TA issues, led by the TAC. Topics covered include the pluralistic classroom, proctoring and cheating, computer resources, peer observation, sex and gender, role-playing, TAs and undergraduates, campus Anthropology resources, TA newsletter reviews, library resources, creative teaching, and audio/videotaping. TAs participating in the 495 are required to keep a journal detailing their experiences throughout the quarter. Additionally, participants must submit a final essay to receive a grade of Satisfactory in the course.

Workshop Week Schedule:

Day 1:
- Overview of course
- Remarks by the department chair, faculty advisor, and management services officer.
- Meeting the first class

Day 2:
- Isolation of the essentials
- Using anticipatory anxiety
- Close observation of individual TA presentations
- Material resources: theory and practice
- Tour of the department

Day 3:
- Time management
- Exam preparation and grading
- Organizing discussion sections

Day 4:
- Lesson planning
- Working with others
- Conclusion and evaluation

Geography 495

Week 1:

- Role and duties of TAs
- Time management
- Meeting the first class - establishing rapport with students

Week 2:
- Audio-video usage
- Campus resources: Films, tutoring in writing and math, counseling, microcomputer lab

Week 3:
- Capturing students' attention
- Setting goals and planning lectures
- Effective chalkboard use
- Motivating students to participate
- Creating workable exercises and assignments

Week 4:
- Guiding effective discussions
- Achieving an interactive classroom
- Teaching foreign students

Week 5:
- Guidelines for writing assignments
- Research and reference aids
- Guest speaker from UCLA Writing Program

Week 6:
- UCLA grading policies
- Preparing exam questions
- Grading assignments and exercises
- Evaluating student essays
- Grading exams and assigning [illegible]des

Remainder of the quarter:

Video-taping and peer observation of individual TAs, followed by peer review and criticism.

Sociology 495A

Week 1:
- Basic course information

Week 2:
- Discovering the discussion section

Week 3:
- Motivating students

Week 4:
- Some lessons from learning theory
- Learning through discussion

Week 5:
- Lecturing and public speaking (guest speaker from Speech Dept.)

Week 6:
- Exams and grading

Week 7:
- Films, simulations, and games

Week 8:
- Writing: teaching and grading (guest speaker from Writing Program)

Week 9:
- The TA's role outside the classroom

Sociology 495B

Week 1:
- Public speaking (speaker from Speech department)

Week 2:
- Field work and experiential learning projects

Week 3:
- Cultural differences in the education process

Week 4:
- Sexism

Week 5:
- Day off

Week 6:
- Teaching critical thinking

Week 7:
- Guest speakers -- Dept. professors

Week 8:
- Qualitative appraisals and evaluations

Week 9:
- Reflections on teaching -- guest speakers (dept. professors)

GRADUATE SCHOOLS

GSLIS 495

The GSLIS 495 consists of three workshops, individual videotaping sessions, and group instruction in the use of office and audiovisual equipment. The first workshop is the Campuswide TA Conference conducted by the TA Training program, while the other two workshops are held on two Saturdays early in the quarter.

Workshop 1:
I. General Session

II. Workshops led by experienced TAs

Workshop 2:

I. Introductory Material
  - 495 course requirements
  - 110 TA responsibilities

II. Oral Communication
  - Organization
  - Credibility
  - Delivery styles
  - Stage fright
  - Audience analysis

III. Individual Oral Presentations
  - Short practice lectures
  - Discussion period

IV. Miscellaneous
  - Enrollment
  - Attendance
  - Grading
  - Cheating

V. Discussion

Workshop 3:
I. Written Communication
  - Revising prose
  - Critique of writing samples
  - Use of correction marks

II. Individual Presentations
  - Short practice lectures
  - Discussion period

III. Wrap-Up

TA EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

MIDTERM EVALUATION FORM

Midterm and informal evaluations serve a number of functions for the teaching assistant. They demonstrate a concern for teaching; they enable immediate changes to be made in teaching styles; and they provide responses to evaluations in a non-punitive format. Unlike end-of-quarter evaluations, they are not used for personnel decisions; they are less biased by responses reflecting the professor in charge; and they provide immediate information which can be used to improve the class before the quarter is over.

The timing of the evaluations is not too critical -- generally concurrent with the midterm exams or during the fourth or fifth weeks of the quarter is a useful approach. The mode of evaluation can be flexible: either in class or taken home and returned during the next class meeting or to the TA's mailbox. The latter two methods provide a greater amount of anonymity for the students.

TAs should stress that they want honest answers -- and then expect them! The results may sometimes be less complimentary than formal evaluations at the end of the quarter; but if the motivation behind conducting midterm evaluations is sufficiently presented, the results will be most helpful in improving the class.

The following are suggested questions for TAs who teach discussion sections, laboratory sections, or studios. The numerical scale ranges from 1 (much below average/poor) to 9 (much above avg./excellent). Some questions may not be applicable (NA) to a particular section.

Discussion Sections

1. Well prepared for the section or lab.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

2. Responsive to students' questions.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

3. Uses class time effectively.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

4. Presents material clearly.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

5. Provides helpful comments on homework assignments, papers, reports, or exams.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

6. Knowledgeable about the subject matter.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

7. Effectively directs and stimulates discussion.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

8. Raises challenging questions or problems for discussion.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

9. Imparts enthusiasm for the subject matter.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

10. Adjusts the pace of the section to the students' level of understanding.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

11. Is concerned that students learn from the material.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

12. Renders complex or difficult material from lectures or reading more understandable.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

13. Available for help outside of class.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

14. Value of the TA's handouts (if applicable).
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

15. Consistency and fairness of grading.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

16. The TA's overall performance.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

Laboratory Sections

1. Renders difficult instructions in the lab manual clear and easy to follow.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

2. Relates experiments performed in the lab to real world research.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

3. Knowledgeable about lab theory and procedure.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

4. Helpful in interpreting students' incorrect or inconsistent lab results.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

5. Provides helpful comments on lab technique before and during the experiment.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

6. Proportion of the time spent lecturing on lab material.
too little __ just right __
too much __

Studio Sections

1. Provided a diversity of materials, techniques, and content.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

2. The projects were valuable in understanding the course.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

3. Assigned projects were appropriate to the level of the course.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

4. Instructor's examples and demonstrations were clear and concise.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

5. Instructor explained each step carefully when discussing processes and techniques.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

6. Instructor explained the underlying rationale for techniques or styles.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 NA

Special Questions for the Foreign Teaching Assistant

1. What comments can you make regarding the organization of and preparation for this discussion or laboratory section?

2. Are your TA's explanations

appropriate to the students' level of understanding?

3. Have you experienced any communication problems in the classroom with the TA? If so, to what extent and in what ways have they affected you?

4. What can the TA do to help you learn the course material more thoroughly and easily?

5. Has your TA given you enough help? If not, how could he/she help you more?

PEER OBSERVATION

Peerless Evaluation

Most evaluations of TAs are literally "peerless," since the people who observe TAs teaching are frequently faculty advisors or departmental administrators. Even the TAC, who does not write evaluations, seldom participates in true peer evaluation. Although the TAC observes the TAs, often the TAs do not have an opportunity to view the TAC's teaching in return. This makes the consultant a temporarily unequal equal, and a real peer exchange hard to find. Yet there are good reasons why peer evaluation of teaching ought to become common practice.

Why Bother?

TAs often have much to gain from observing each other's teaching. They can profitably share techniques, successes, and problems. Each peer observer can expand his or her own file of teaching ideas and materials while helping a friend polish classroom demeanor. The results can include a net savings of the TA's time and a richer, more coherent teaching program. Handled with a little care, the whole process can be as close to nonthreatening as any observation ever will be.

Minimizing Bother, Maximizing Benefits

A peer observation program can easily be set up through a 495 seminar, and can even become an integral part of the seminar. Failing that, TA Consultants are usually in a good position to initiate and coordinate such programs. Or, interested TAs can simply agree on their own to work out a convenient schedule and informal protocol. At base, all that's needed are two TAs willing to spend a couple of hours improving their teaching skills.

A peer observation program need not require major commitments from anyone, but it is important that the minor commitments involved be met. This just boils down to watching carefully and responding sensitively while wearing the observer's hat, then faithfully taking one's turn as the observed.

Making a peer observation program work well involves a little planning and diplomacy as well. Here are some suggestions which may help smooth out the pedagogical exchange and ensure that it's profitable.

• Set the date in advance. Some people don't dote on surprise visitors. On the other hand, many unannounced observers have wound up twiddling their thumbs for twenty minutes while the students take a quiz. Give the other TA a choice of dates to assure that he or she will visit your classroom within a week of your visit to his or hers.

• Agree between yourselves whether the observer is to remain quietly anonymous during class, explain his or her presence to the students, or participate fully in class activities. Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages, but it is best for both TAs to decide what sounds most comfortable.

• Keep the date, and arrive early (dramatic late entrances tend to disrupt the class). If possible, chat with the other TA briefly before class to set him or her at ease and to ascertain his or her objectives for the class hour.

• Decide whether the notes you'll take will be written or mental. I prefer to write copious notes while observing someone else's teaching, but this makes some teachers nervous. Be that as it may, if much time will elapse between the classroom visit and the discussion it engenders, be sure to jot down your comments immediately after the class, if not during.

• If you can't discuss the class at length with the other TA after the class is over, at least talk together for a couple of minutes before parting. Briefly mentioning the aspect of the class you liked most and throwing in a little praise goes a long way toward alleviating observation anxiety.

What to Observe and How to Give Feedback

What do you look/hope for in your own teaching? After many years of college, you have had experience with good and bad teachers. Look for familiar flaws, as well as the finer points of teaching. Do watch the students as well as the teacher though; students' responses, or lack thereof, speak volumes.

Some useful peer evaluation checklists follow. Whether or not the checklists mention anything you would not have noted on your own, they definitely can help make your observation more systematic and your feedback more coherent.

• The two of you can meet after each visitation, or you can wait until after you've observed each other and trade notes in one session. Either way, clarity, honesty, specificity, and tact pay off.

• Before you confer with each other, take a few minutes individually to review your notes and organize your comments. It's important to be specific. A comment like, "You should encourage student participation" may not be useful unless you can suggest

when more participation would have been valuable and are willing to discuss what might have been done to elicit it. It's usually easy to organize specific observation under general headings such as organization, clarifying objectives, and student rapport.

• Deliver your comments in a nonthreatening fashion. After all, you're out to help each other, not pass judgment.

• Set the other person at ease first. Talk about general aspects of his or her teaching that impressed you favorably, verbally reaffirm the collaborative nature of the present undertaking -- whatever it takes to establish a supportive atmosphere.

• Begin the serious discussion of the other person's class with constructive criticism, end with praise. Studies show it is better to give "negative" feedback first, then positive (contrary to popular myth).

• Phrase constructive feedback tactfully, putting it in second or third person (avoid, "I didn't like...") and emphasizing alternatives (i.e. never, "I thought you screwed up on X," but rather, "How would your students have responded if you had done Y instead?").

As you switch to positive feedback and encouragement, switch to the first person so that your comments become personal validations (i.e. "I was very impressed by the way you handled Z").

• Give the other person equal time. Peer observation entails an exchange of ideas and responses. The more equal the exchange, the better.

• Confidentiality is crucial. What you see in the other person's classroom, what you say in conference should never circulate beyond the two of you without the other person's express permission.

Other Forms of Peer Observation

Videotaping: Arrange through the TA Consultant in your department to have your class and the class or classes of one of your peers videotaped. Schedule a private film festival during which you watch and comment on each other's tapes. Videotape allows you to observe your class at the same time the others do and it helps you to make your comments on others' teaching clear and specific.

Group Visitation: This works the same way as binary visitation except that a number of your peers visit your classroom together and then give you a group response. Each member of the group hosts the other members in turn. Some advantages of group visitation are diversity and camaraderie, while the disadvantage is some loss of intimacy.

Whether done in pairs or in groups, with or without technological aid, peer observation can be one of the

most profitable and enjoyable ways to polish your teaching skills. A relatively small time commitment can reward you and the other TAs in your department with improved teaching evaluations.

Peer Observation Form

Physical Appearance: Note any distractions or problems. Does the teacher vary his or her other physical activities?

Clarity of Voice: Does the teacher speak clearly and distinctly?

Goals: How are the goals of the class determined? Who selects them? Are they clear to everyone? Are they appropriate?

Rapport: Does the teacher understand the students' remarks? Is there mutual respect between the students and the teacher? Do the students feel comfortable participating?

Student Participation: Are the students alert? Are they involved? In what way?

Level of Interaction: On what cognitive level is the class taking place? Knowledge, interpretation, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation? Is the level appropriate for the goals of the course?

Interaction Patterns: What interaction patterns are prevalent? Who initiates them? Are the patterns appropriate for the goals of the class?

Clarity of Explanations: Are the teacher's explanations, instructions, etc., clear? Is an appropriate vocabulary used?

Questions: At what cognitive level? How complex? Are they clear? Is the wait time appropriate? Are they appropriate for the goals of the class? What is the progression in a series of questions?

Questions and Answers About Videotaping

What Is It? The UCLA TA Training Program offers TAs free videotaping services. Review of a videotaping session may be made in conjunction with a TA Consultant or by the TA alone.

Videotapes are provided as loans by the TA Training Program and can be kept for as long as one quarter, although because of demand we prefer to have them returned sooner. After recording, the tape is left in the possession of the TA who was recorded. It is then the TA's responsibility to return the tape Audiovisual Services (15 Powell Library) or, if the performance was so exemplary that he or she wants to keep the tape forever, to replace the tape.

Tapes cannot be used for personnel matters, and a signed release form must be filed with the TA Training Program if the tape is to be shown to others without the TA present or if it is to be retained for more than one quarter by the department.

Why Do It? It is difficult to learn something well without experimentation. Recognition and self-evaluation are initial steps in improving a new skill. Videotaping provides specific information about verbal and nonverbal behavior and helps speed up the process of improvement.

How Does It Work? Videotaping is free and simple to arrange. Requests for taping sessions should be made at least a week in advance and preferably two weeks in advance. Arrangements are made through the Instructional Media office. Call the Audio Visual Order Desk at 206-6591 to set up the actual session.

Videotaping sessions last for an entire class session and the tape is available to the TA immediately. The TA has ten days in which to view his or her tape. Videotape playback is available at several locations on campus. After one quarter the tape must be returned to the Audiovisual Services Office where it will be erased.

What Happens In Playback? The TAs have the option of viewing their tapes alone; however, the TA Consultant or a peer observer can be very helpful in contributing both objective and specific suggestions on technique.

Playback facilities for the videotapes are available at three campus locations: Audio Visual Services in 290 Powell Library; the Biomedical Library (9th Stack level in the large reading room); and the School of Education -- Media Services Office in 326 Moore Hall.

To become effective instructors it is important for TAs to assess their own performances. TAs need to know, for example, if they enunciate well, give clear directions, or ask cogent questions. TA Consultants generally offer a non-directive review of a tape. Their goal is not to criticize a TA's performance but to draw out self-criticism, to serve as a sounding board for the TA's self-reviews, and to offer suggestions for alternate teaching approaches.

If you have any further questions about videotaping, please call the TA Training Program at 825-9269.

Analyzing a Videotape

Climate

Play the tape through once, noting those of your behaviors which set the "climate" of the classroom.

- Do they look away when you ask questions?
- Do they take notes furiously when you ask questions?
- When responding to a question, do they speak softly or murmur?
- Do you accord them silence for think-time both after a question is asked and after an answer is suggested?
- Do you encourage/discourage

a superordinate/subordinate hierarchy between you and the class? Physically? Verbally?

- Do you use and refer to their ideas?

- Which of your comments build up your own ego at the expense of the students' comments? Examples: "Obviously, such and such is true." "You all see this, don't you?" "The best way to do this problem is this way."

- Is there a "moat" of empty seats between you and the class?

- In what ways can you make the climate of this classroom more comfortable for interaction?

- Do you acknowledge and value the students' contributions?

Questioning

Choose a representative 10-minute segment of the videotape and write out all the questions you asked during this time.

- Note your "wait-time" (that period of time after a question is posed before you answer it yourself, rephrase it, add to it, or call on someone to respond). If it is shorter than 4-5 seconds, you are not allowing your students the modest amount of time needed to think about the question and to formulate a response.

To analyze your questioning pattern, answer the following:

1. Where do you move from information-level questions to those requiring higher levels of thought: those of analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and application?

2. Note the types of your questions: ask yourself, how does this pattern hamper or facilitate the students' thinking?

3. How could you have handled this differently? With what results?

Responding

Using the same segment of the videotape, note your responses to your students' answers.

- How are you encouraging and extending their mental and verbal processing?

- Where do you think your rapid reward of a correct answer prematurely terminated the others' thinking?

- How and where might you have responded differently?

- What ways can you think of to encourage more interaction on the part of the students with the ideas of the course?

Concepts

Write down the name of each concept you mention on this segment of the tape.

- What must your students know in order to understand and use each of these concepts?

- What evidence do you have

that they, in fact, do possess this knowledge?

- How might you determine this?

Facilitating Learning

- What is the goal of this lesson? Where/when do you state it to the class? How do you attempt to show or ascertain its relevance to their interests, needs, lives? Is there a summation at the end of the lesson? What will this accomplish?

- Look at your students' posture, facial expressions, behavior. What messages are they conveying to you? What will you do with this information?

- Learning requires an investment from the learner. Where, on this tape, have you given the responsibility for learning to the students?

- Note your tone of voice. Is it monotonous? How do you convey enthusiasm for your subject? How could you have done so?

- How and where do you model systematic, methodological, thinking behavior for the class? (What they learn is not as important, in the long run, as how they learn -- and you could be the model.)

- Which of your behaviors are counter-productive? What do you plan to do with this knowledge? Be specific.

CONCLUSION

Evaluation of the individual departments' TA training programs is as important as evaluation of individual TAs' sections. There should be a reasonably formal end-of-quarter evaluation, as well as a continuing critical dialogue with TA Consultants and TAs throughout the quarter. Such evaluations will not only help to structure the following term's program, but will also help the TA Consultant in writing up a more pointed and accurate year-end report for the TA Training Office. We have included here a sample evaluation form that might either be useful in itself or provide a format for a more specific evaluation of a department's TA Training Program.

DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TAS AND SUPERVISING FACULTY

Several departments on campus have drafted documents on the roles and responsibilities of TAs and supervising faculty. These were formulated (1) to improve the quality of teaching in undergraduate courses; (2) to clarify the mutual responsibilities and obligations of the professor and the TA; and, (3) to improve the instruction and training of graduate students as educators.

Because TAs are apprentice personnel, they MAY NOT be given sole responsibility for: (1) the instructional content of any course; (2) selection of student assignments; (3) planning of examinations; (4) determining the term grade for students; (5) instructing the entire enrollment of a course; nor, (6) the entire instruction of an individual or group of students enrolled in any University course.

BIOLOGY

The following guidelines were modeled after those developed by the Department of Kinesiology (see below).

Responsibilities

TAs' assignments are expected to involve an appropriate range of supportive activities, which may include:

- Assisting the faculty member in the preparation of course materials.
- Teaching in laboratory or discussion sections for the faculty member in charge of the course.
- Attending the faculty member's lectures or other instruction periods.
- Reading student papers and examinations.
- Assisting with student performance evaluations and grading.
- Holding office hours.

Guidelines

- The faculty member should provide TAs with active feedback such as communication of course-related content and feedback regarding teaching effectiveness. All forms of evaluation should be conducted with full TA agreement and sufficient advance notice.
- Mandatory weekly meetings between the faculty member and the course TAs should be held and should include a dry run of the upcoming lab. TAs and faculty should discuss the content and presentation of the lab. The faculty member or another appointed, qualified person should provide equipment instruction.
- Supervising faculty should provide TAs with sufficient information to insure that they are confident about the content, presentation and implementation of materials in labs or discussion sections.

This information may include: rationales, goals and objectives of the session, specific content and appropriate emphasis on each topic, questions to ask or points to cover, potential problem areas and possible solutions, and references to assist in the TA's preparation.

- Faculty members should provide TAs with keys to his or her lecture exams, including detailed breakdowns for the assignment of points and guidelines for grading.

- The supervising faculty member is responsible for instruction and grading in all university courses. Thus, although TAs may write all or portions of the laboratory quizzes, exams or assignments, the supervising faculty member must check them and provide feedback for necessary revision.

- Faculty members, not experienced TAs, are responsible for the apprenticeship of less experienced TAs.

- TAs may lecture on a limited basis and under the supervision and guidance of the faculty member. TAs should not lecture simply to substitute for an absent instructor.

- A TA's appointment specifies a 20-hour per week time commitment to include the activities noted above. If necessary, the faculty member may have to choose among the options for use of the TA's time with highest priorities given to the more central duties of preparation for teaching, teaching, office hours, and some grading of student work.

- A TA's appointment is a binding contract for the duration of the quarter. Once instruction has begun, a TA may break the contract only in an extreme emergency.

- TAs and teaching faculty should present a professional attitude to students at all times. Disagreements or problems related to teaching of the course should be handled confidentially.

- All TAs new to UCLA's Biology Department are required to participate in the BIO 495 course for TA training, prior to or during their first quarter of teaching. TAs are required to enroll in BIO 375 for 4 units each quarter that they are active as TAs.

Resolution of Problems Concerning the Guidelines

- If problems arise concerning the roles and responsibilities of supervising faculty and TAs, involved parties should meet to discuss the problem and its resolution.

- If this does not resolve the problem, the TA or supervising faculty member should consult with the Department Chair.

CHEMISTRY AND BIOCHEMISTRY

Responsibilities

Specific responsibilities of Chemistry Teaching Assistants depend on whether they are teaching a lecture or a laboratory course.

Responsibilities for lecture/discussion sections (Chemistry 2, 11A, 11B, 21, 23 and 25):

- To conduct the discussion section meetings each for each section assigned. These may include quizzes, solving problems and answering students' questions.
- Attend all lectures, or if this is impossible, obtain notes of the session missed.
- Maintain regular office hours for at least two hours per week.
- Maintain a regular discussion hour in the course resource room if one is available.
- Read and grade the questions assigned to you on the midterm and final examinations.
- Attend <u>all</u> TA meetings.
- Return all borrowed books at the end of the quarter.

Responsibilities of TAs for laboratory sections (Chemistry 11BL, 11CL and the laboratory portions of 23 and 25):

- Conduct the four-hour laboratory meetings for each lab section assigned. Be punctual, observe and question students, and instruct them on correct laboratory technique and methods of recording of observations.
- Maintain regular office hours for at least two hours per week.
- Maintain regular office hours in the resource rooms for Chem 11LB and 11CL.
- Grade the laboratory reports, and laboratory quizzes that form one's particular grading assignment.
- Issue and return students' lockers.
- Be responsible for the cleanliness and orderliness of the lab at all times and the condition of the balances students use.
- Attend all TA meetings.
- Return all borrowed books at the end of the quarter.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Responsibilities

TAs are responsible for a variety of support activities for the GSLIS 110 section to which they are assigned, including:

- Planning and leading at least one 110 lesson.
- Attending 110 classes.
- Maintaining one formal office hour per week.

- Meeting regularly with the 110 lecturer.

- Taking attendance.

- Assisting with preparation of course materials.

- Reading/evaluating student paper and examinations.

- Assisting with student performance evaluations and grading.

- Giving tutorial or small group assistance to students.

Guidelines

- TAs are employed 25% time or 10 hours per week.

- Students currently enrolled and registered in the GSLIS and have completed 3 quarters in residence with a GPA of 3.0 or above (including completion of 410, 411, 420 and 421 with a B or better) are eligible for consideration for TAships.

- A committee consisting of 110 instructors review students' applications and files and recommends selection based on stated specialization or career plans related to teaching, demonstrated interest or experience in teaching, performance in GSLIS courses completed, advanced reference and bibliography courses, interpersonal skills, and written and oral communication skills.

- All TAs and alternates must complete GSLIS Training and Supervision of Teaching Assistants, a 2-unit course offered Fall Quarter.

- TAs enroll in GSLIS 375 the quarter of their appointments. Units earned do not count toward the MLS degree, but do count as part of the official courseload offered.

- TAs and lecturers should discuss <u>in detail</u> what each other's responsibilities will be <u>prior</u> to the start of the quarter. All efforts should be made to maintain this communication throughout the quarter.

- Each 110 instructor will evaluate his/her TA to record performance as well as how much is learned. The evaluation will become a part of the student's dossier.

- Teaching assistants are expected to submit a 1-3 page report evaluating the course, the instructor and the teaching experience as soon as possible following the end of the quarter.

KINESIOLOGY

Responsibilities

TAs' assignments are expected to involve an appropriate range of supportive activities, which may include:

- Assisting the faculty member in the preparation of course materials.

- Teaching in laboratory or discussion sections for the faculty member in charge of the course.

- Attending the faculty

member's lectures or other instruction periods.

- Reading student papers and examinations.

- Assisting with student performance evaluations and grading.

- Holding office hours.

Guidelines

- The faculty member should provide TAs with active feedback such as communication of course-related content and feedback regarding teaching effectiveness. All forms of evaluation should be conducted with full TA agreement and sufficient advance notice.

- Mandatory weekly meetings between the faculty member and the course TAs should be held and should include a dry run of the upcoming lab. TAs and faculty should discuss the content and presentation of the lab. The faculty member or another appointed, qualified person should provide equipment instruction.

- Supervising faculty should provide TAs with sufficient information to insure that they are confident about the content, presentation and implementation of materials in labs or discussion sections. This information may include: rationales, goals and objectives of the session, specific content and appropriate emphasis on each topic, questions to ask or points to cover, potential problem areas and possible solutions, and references to assist in the TA's preparation.

- The faculty member should provide TAs with keys to his or her lecture exams, including detailed breakdowns for the assignment of points and guidelines for grading.

- The supervising faculty member is responsible for instruction and grading in all university courses. Thus, although TAs may write all or portions of the laboratory quizzes, exams or assignments, the supervising faculty member must check them and provide feedback for necessary revision.

- Faculty members, not experienced TAs, are responsible for the apprenticeship of less experienced TAs. Experienced TAs with additional "Head TA" duties should be compensated for these duties or relieved of others.

- TAs may lecture on a limited basis and under the supervision and guidance of the faculty member. TAs should not lecture simply to substitute for an absent instructor.

- A TA's appointment specifies a 10- or 20-hour per week time commitment to include the activities noted above. If necessary, the faculty member may have to choose among the options for use of the TA's time with highest priorities given to the more central duties of preparation for teaching, teaching, office hours, and some grading of student work.

Resolution of Problems Concerning the Guidelines

- If problems arise concerning the roles and responsibilities of supervising faculty and TAs, involved parties should meet to discuss the problem and its resolution.

- If this does not resolve the problem, the TA or supervising faculty member should consult with the Department Chair.

PSYCHOLOGY

Responsibilities

- Assisting with the preparation of materials.

- Assisting with the preparation and the grading of exams.

- Attending lectures.

- Reading papers and exams.

- Holding office hours.

- Leading discussion and review sessions for students.

Guidelines

- The professor and the TA should arrange a meeting to discuss the TA's duties and to plan the distribution of his or her assigned hours.

- Voluntary TAships or the use of readers as TAs are not allowed without university permission.

- TAs have the right to adequate supervision from the faculty member in charge of the course.

- TAs have the right to inspect their file and read the evaluation made by their supervising professor. They may write self evalutiaons for inclusion to be used for reappointment procedures.

- TAs may write a letter of evaluation of the supervision received from a professor. This could become a permanent part of the professor's file.

- Occasional supervised lectures are encouraged, but under no circumstances should TAs have full responsibility for a course. Students who have been advanced to candidacy can apply to be a Teaching Fellow and take responsibility for lower division courses.

- TAs appointed at 50% time should work on the average 20 hours per week while TAs appointed at 25% time should work on the average 10 hours per week. This includes time spent in ALL activities to do with TAing, including 495 training for new TAs.

- For more information, consult The TA Handbook (from the Teaching Assistant Training Program of the Office of Instructional Development) or The Apprentice Personnel Policy Manual (from the Graduate Division).

Resolution of Problems Concerning the Guidelines

- Talk to the professor.

- If dissatisfied, speak to a

student member of the faculty-student TA committee or a TA union member from the department. The union will discuss the problem and suggest an appropriate course of action.

- If necessary, the departmental TA union will pursue the problem with the faculty-student TA committee or mediate between the student and the professor or department chairperson.

- Extra-departmental grievance procedures exist through the campus-wide TA union or the campus ombudsperson. It is suggested that intra-departmental procedures, such as the department ombudsperson, be used first. The TA union may also support extra-departmental initiatives.

SOCIOLOGY

The guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of TAs were developed by a committee of faculty and graduate students and reviewed by the Department's Executive Committee and representatives of its Graduate Student Sociology Association.

Responsibilities of the TA

- Teach discussion sections (usually three sections of a single course of one hour each).

- Hold office hours and otherwise advise and tutor students (minimum of two regular office hours per week plus approximately 2 hours per week for individual appointments with students).

- Attend lectures (3 hours per week).

- Be familiar with the reading materials assigned students.

- Administer examinations and make-up examinations.

- Grade examinations and term papers. In the case of make-up examinations and late papers, grading becomes the sole responsibility of faculty members one week after the final examination period.

In addition, providing there is mutual agreement on the part of the faculty member and the TA, TAs may also:

- Lecture occasionally in place of the faculty member.

- Hold special review classes.

- Participate in the development of the course syllabus, especially as the course content and the assignments relate to the content of the discussion sections.

- Participate in the development of examinations and other assignments.

Responsibilities of Faculty Members

- Familiarize TAs with the content of the course and the nature of the assignments.

- Determine the grading standard and student grades.

• Review TA's plans for the conduct of the discussion section.

• Oversee and advise TAs about their teaching activities.

• Emphasize to students that the discussion sections are an integral part of the course.

• It is recommended that faculty members be present for at least the early part of examination periods.

• Make certain that TAs are provided with texts and other reading materials.

Guidelines

• A committee consisting of the Chair, the faculty member responsible for Sociology 495, the Chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and one or more representatives of the Graduate Student Sociology Association will make TA assignments by matching the choices of faculty members and TAs. Assignments shall be made by the sixth week of the preceding quarter.

• First year TAs must enroll in Sociology 495.

• Professors and TAs need to plan jointly for the ways in which the 20 hours of work per week (an average over the quarter) can be most effectively utilized. Leading discussion sections and working with students on creative and demanding assignments take priority over grading of examinations.
o Faculty members should develop mechanisms for obtaining feedback from TAs on discussion section activities, for modifying assignments of TAs, for collaborating with TAs to improve the course as a whole, and for advising TAs on ways they may improve their performance.

• TAs are not responsible for routine clerical tasks unless they fail to provide office staff with such work less than five days before it is required.

Resolution of Problems Concerning the Guidelines

• The faculty member or TA should first confer with the faculty member teaching Sociology 495 or the TA Consultant, or both.

• If the dispute is not resolved by this mechanism, the Chair should be informed. He or she will consult with the Executive Committee and seek to resolve the dispute.